

PEN PICTURES OF MORMONISM

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OF
MORMONISM

BY
REV. M. L. OSWALT



*Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good.
Abhor that which is evil.*

—New Testament

PHILADELPHIA
AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
1899

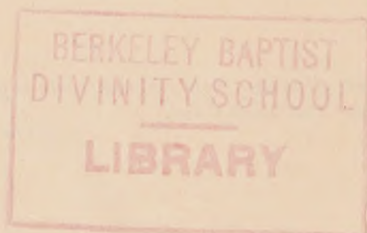
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PREFACE

THIS discussion of Mormonism has been written from a knowledge gathered by experience and close study of its doctrine. It is offered to the public with an earnest desire that it may be a means of checking, to some extent at least, the spread of that dangerous delusion. While it is brief, I have endeavored to make the points clear and the argument conclusive.

I have been associated with Mormonism, more or less, for the last twenty years. For three years of that time I was connected with the Mormon church, and lived in a Mormon settlement at Manassa, Colorado. I joined the Mormons in 1879, and moved among them in 1880. The Manassa settlement was composed of Mormons from the Southern States and from Utah. Those from the South were just being initiated into Mormonism, and they had a very hard time of it. They had been promised by the elders that they should be carried to a good country where they would be wonderfully blessed as to the necessities of life, and where they would also enjoy the "sweet association of the saints," who were represented as living together in a state of almost perfect peace and harmony. They had also been told by the elders, that the wrath and indignation of Almighty God was soon to be poured out upon the nations of the earth, and by wars and famines and many other devastating judgments, he would make a full

end of all the inhabitants of the world except the Latter Day Saints. They were to escape unharmed, and their command was to "flee to the mountains for safety." Believing the elders, they were afraid to longer remain in "Babylon"; they fled in haste to the "refuge in Zion."

But alas! when the newly made saints arrived in the "Paradise of peace and plenty," they found it a land of almost perpetual snow and ice. They were set down in San Luis Valley, which has an altitude of eight thousand feet above sea level and has a climate, as a certain wag once described as "nine months winter and three months late in the fall." With this rather facetious description of the country, it may well be imagined that those who went from the sunny South with the intention of farming, did not feel themselves flattered with the prospect for even a scant living. Neither did they find their newly acquired fellow-saints altogether of a saintly disposition, but in possession of about as much of the faults of human nature as had the "wicked Gentiles" whom they had left in "Babylon"; and even the "saints" from Utah, who had belonged to the church for years, and were sent to Manassa as special lights to instruct the new converts in the ways of "Zion," even they themselves were not found living strictly up to the Ten Commandments.

All these things put together brought about discouragement and complaints. The epidemic spread until it affected very nearly every Southern "saint" in the settlement. Such wholesale dissatisfaction as was there manifest, I have never seen among any other people. Some returned to their former homes, while others would have gone had they been able to meet the expenses of the

trip. Still another class wanted to return, but were afraid to quit the church on account of the fearful judgments that were pronounced against the apostate.

While this epidemic of the blues was raging, the Mormon priesthood was not idle, but vigorously applied the church lash to whip the disgruntled element back into line. The horrors of the apostate were presented in all their hideousness, even to the extent that they would not enjoy a moment's peace in this life, and in the world to come would be tormented forever with the devil and his angels.

Notwithstanding these sore disappointments in consequence of the misrepresentation of the elders, and the great dissatisfaction resulting therefrom, there were but very few who repudiated the Mormon faith entirely. While many left the settlement and returned to their former homes or went to other places, they still clung to Mormonism, at least in part. Some have been known to move back and forth between their old home and the Mormon settlements, a distance of more than a thousand miles, a half-dozen times. While they could see no good in Mormonism, they had learned to fear the priesthood. This had made them miserable; and it is this which holds many a one to Mormonism to-day.

After remaining in Colorado for nearly three years, I returned to my former home in Choctaw County, Mississippi, in December, 1882. On my return I found my former friends all moving along as if there were no such thing in the world as Mormonism; and as to the judgments prophesied by the elders, I found, of course, that they had not come. I did, however, feel that they had been in part visited upon us, and that they had been de-

served, in that we had so easily become the dupes of fanaticism.

I returned to the Baptist church at Bethlehem, and asked to be restored to its fellowship. My acknowledgments were accepted, and the brethren gave me a welcome back into the fold. I entered the ministry in December, 1893, and was ordained to the full work in July, 1896.

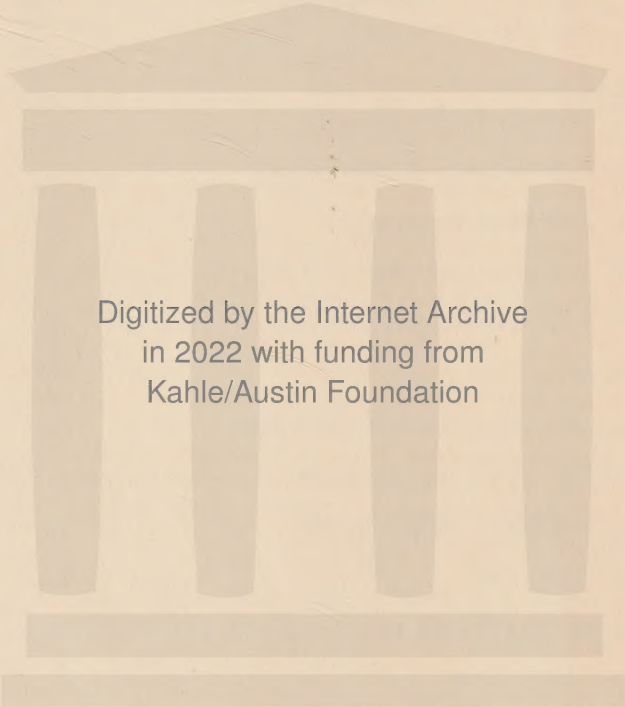
In the summer of 1895 some Mormon elders appeared in our community, where all was peace and quiet. They began preaching their pernicious doctrine, and condemning the religion of the people, and soon a tumult arose. I then saw more clearly than ever the tendency of Mormonism to lead unstable souls astray, and to destroy the unity and happiness of families and communities. I went to work at once to warn the people against this pernicious evil; and from then till the present I have not ceased to wage the warfare as best I could, with the help of God, and with gratifying results. The curses of the Mormon priesthood against me have been fierce, even threatening to take my life, and were it not for my many friends, no doubt they would undertake the vile deed. But I know whom I trust, and am assured that he is able to deliver me. And should my life be taken in the work, I make it a willing sacrifice for the cause of Christ, for all my energies are engaged against Mormonism, and to this end this work is dedicated, earnestly praying God's blessings to attend all who may read it with an honest heart.

M. L. O.

APRIL, 1899.

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PEN PICTURES OF MORMONISM

CHAPTER I

HISTORY OF MORMONISM

THE Mormon Church, most commonly known as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, was founded by Joseph Smith. He claimed divine inspiration, and declared himself "prophet, seer, and revelator," with supernatural powers. He claimed that God had committed to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, with greater power than was ever assumed by the Pope of Rome.

His church was organized in Fayette, N. Y., April 6, 1830. For sixty-nine years it has been making history, in which its objectionable doctrine is demonstrated in practical life; and it has gotten itself a name and reputation for dark deeds of barbarism and immorality that have become proverbial throughout the civilized world.

Smith led his followers from Fayette, N. Y., to Kirtland, O., and from that place into the State of Missouri. Here he undertook to establish himself permanently, but his revolutionary scheme soon resulted in his expulsion from the State.

One very prominent feature of the Mormon re-

ligion, from its incipency, is its desire for political conquest. Smith claimed that his church was the kingdom of God; and was set up in fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy which says: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."¹

It is apparent to the thoughtful reader that this prophecy refers to Christ and his spiritual kingdom—the reign of grace—instituted at his coming. But as Smith's presumptuous folly knew no bounds, he undertook to rob Christ of the honor, the power, and the glory, and apply it all to himself. So he began at once to bring it to pass.

He had published numerous "revelations," with reference to his proposed kingdom, in which Independence, Mo., was pointed out as the "center place," or nucleus, for the greatest empire that the world ever knew. Immediately around this "center place," the "Saints" were to build the "city of the New Jerusalem," which should be called the "city of Zion"; and at the "center place," a temple was to be built, the magnificence and splendor of which should excel the grandest edifice that had ever adorned the face of the earth. It should stand forever, and Christ would first appear in it at his second coming.

Here Smith undertook a crusade. He had gotten his followers to believe that he was a second

¹ Dan. 2 : 44.

Moses and Joshua combined, and that their victory over the "Gentiles" was assured, as a foregone conclusion. His warriors were declared invincible; that one of them could chase a thousand, and two could put ten thousand to flight. As Moses led the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage and gave them the law, so in like manner the prophet Joseph was to marshal the Latter Day Saints, and act as their great lawgiver. As Israel, under the leadership of Joshua, turned to flight the armies of the aliens, so also, in like manner, the "Saints" were to drive all opposition before them, subduing the entire country; even the national government itself would soon fall into their hands. Nor did Smith's predictions end at this, but his wonderful kingdom was to extend its conquest into other nations, until the entire world should come under its dominion, and he and his Mormons should be supreme.

Even before the close of the first decade of this strange religion, with its small following, the revolt was made. They took up arms against the non-Mormon citizens adjacent to their settlements, and demanded full possession of the country. But the assault was promptly resented, and by force of arms, under orders from Governor Boggs, the citizens, assisted by the State troops, drove the Mormons from the State.

Just here we reach a decisive point in the investigation of Mormonism. All of Smith's prophecies concerning the establishment of his followers in Missouri failed when they were driven from the State; therefore he has gone on record as a false

prophet.¹ Moreover, that domineering spirit, so prevalent in all systems of false religion, and which has stained their path throughout the ages with the blood of their victims, is brought very conspicuously to the front. It was the same spirit that led Cain to slay his brother Abel, and to-day it lies concealed in the Mormon priesthood, awaiting an opportunity for its manifestation.

In 1839, after the expulsion from Missouri, we find Smith collecting his scattered forces in Hancock County, Ill. Here he built the city of Nauvoo. Once more he indulged in revelation and prophesied that this place should "be to the Saints an everlasting habitation." But again the prophet "reckoned without his host," for their stay in Nauvoo was very brief. Being enraged over their defeat in Missouri, and actuated by that domineering spirit which carries with it such a train of evils, they became guilty of outbreking evil, and that too, under the directions of the priesthood.

While here, in 1843, Smith introduced his revelation sanctioning polygamy; and the following year he came to his tragic end. Several times he had been tried by the courts for violations of the law, but as his followers were always ready to swear to anything to clear him, he was never convicted. Finally he was arrested and lodged in jail at Carthage, Ill., and while here an infuriated mob assembled and shot him.

Thus ended the career of one of the most pre-

¹"Doctrine and Covenants," pp. 214, 365, 380.

sumptuous fanatics, perhaps, that the world has ever known. And the system that he instituted, and left to curse the human race, has given the United States more trouble than all other religious systems therein, and has been the cause of shedding much innocent blood. It is a foul blot on the fair escutcheon of our nation, a disgrace to the civilization of the nineteenth century, and a stench in the nostrils of Almighty God.

Soon after the death of the prophet Joseph the church was rent into several factions over the choice of his successor as president. A bitter contest ensued, in which a half-dozen of Smith's apostles, together with several others, were candidates for the office. Each candidate urged the claim that God had revealed to him that he should be made president; but, as they could not agree on any one, each party withdrew from the rest, and elected its own leader as president. The following are some of the sects that thus originated: the Rigdonites, the Strangites, the Morrisites, the Whitmerites, the Hendrickites, the Josephites, and the Brighamites. Each of these sects claimed to be separately and distinctly the true Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and denounced all the others as a lot of apostates.

The Brighamites formed the majority, and they are inhabiting Utah to-day, and are now sending many elders abroad over the land to revolutionize the world. The number of their communicants is estimated at three hundred thousand.

The Josephite sect, which elected young Smith, who was then a boy, as its president, is second in

importance. Its membership is about fifty thousand, and is scattered over several of the Northwestern States. These have never held to the doctrine of polygamy, and, as is the case with the other smaller sects, have not given the public such trouble as have the Brighamites.

But, to return to the "Saints" in Nauvoo. The breach between the Brighamites and their "Gentile" neighbors soon widened to such an extent as to render it impossible for them to longer remain in that place. They therefore left the city in 1846, and took up their line of march across the Western plains to seek an asylum in the valleys of Utah, remote from civilization, where they might practise their religion without molestation.

Brigham Young died in 1877, and John Taylor was chosen as his successor. John Taylor died in Mexico in 1887. He being a polygamist, and fearing the Edmunds anti-polygamy law, which was at the time being enforced in Utah, had left his home in Salt Lake City, and died a fugitive from justice. Taylor was succeeded by Wilford Woodruff, who died early in the year 1898. He has recently been succeeded by Lorenzo Snow, who is declared the Mormon "president, prophet, and seer."

Thus we have given a brief sketch of the Mormon sect, which, as we have seen, started in New York, but soon moved into Ohio, and then into Missouri, and next into Illinois, and from there into Utah.

Brutal deeds of tyranny and barbarism prevailed among them to a greater extent during the admin-

istrations of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young than under that of their successors. This reformation is only in appearance, and was brought about by the strong arm of the law. In principle, Mormonism is just the same now that it was at the first, and all it wants is a chance to enforce its pernicious laws. Then the full extent of its wicked design would be made manifest. As long as it holds to Joseph Smith as its lawgiver, and stands upon his revelations as its foundations, it is to be regarded as an enemy to our civilization and religious liberty.

Among the many crimes that have blackened the pages of its history, there is one that demands especial notice. It is the Mountain Meadows massacre. It occurred in 1857. At that time there were but few non-Mormons in Utah. Brigham Young had been governor of the Territory from its organization, during which time he was supreme dictator to his subjects in all things pertaining to Church and State. Having determined to play the rôle of absolute sovereign, independently of the United States government, he put the Territory under martial law, and ordered that all "Gentiles" attempting to enter or pass through the Territory should be put to death. At the time of this state of affairs, a large and wealthy company of emigrants was en route from the East to California, and in passing through Utah, had camped in a small valley called Mountain Meadows. While here a company of Mormons and Indians, led by John D. Lee, and acting under orders from Brigham Young, besieged the camp; but owing to its

peculiar situation amid the surrounding hills, they were unable to get at it without serious loss of life from the guns of the emigrants.

After the siege had continued a few days the Mormons presented a flag of truce in order to decoy the emigrants from the camp. A conference was held in which the emigrants were promised their lives, provided they would leave all their arms, wagons, cattle, and other property, and depart from the Territory on foot at once. Seeing that they were wholly at the mercy of the Mormons, the proposition was accepted, and they were marched out on their way in single file, the men in front. A lot of armed Indians were stationed in ambush near the route that the emigrants were to take, and as they came into the position arranged for the massacre, the signal was given, and the Indians killed the men, while the Mormons butchered the women and children in the most brutal manner imaginable. The bodies of the dead were left upon the ground to be devoured by the beasts of the forest and the vultures of the air. Their property was taken and divided among the wicked horde that committed the horrible deed.

The following year an officer of the United States visited the scene of the atrocious crime, and found one hundred and twenty human skeletons, more or less dismembered, which he gathered up and buried. The Mormons do not deny the massacre, but they lay it to John D. Lee and the Indians.

In the year of the massacre, James Buchanan became president of the United States. He ap-

pointed a non-Mormon governor for Utah, but Brigham Young and his followers refused to recognize the appointment. An armed force was sent to Utah to quell the seditious Mormons, and then they submitted to a "Gentile" governor.

As soon as intelligence of the massacre was published abroad, detectives were sent to Utah to hunt down the perpetrators. Their mission was made known to Brigham Young, who feigned entire ignorance as to the guilty parties, but promised to assist in detecting them. In 1876, nineteen years after the massacre, J. D. Lee was captured; and the following year he was tried in the Federal Court, at Beaver City, Utah, and was convicted and executed as leader in the horrible affair at Mountain Meadows.

Lee was convicted by Mormon testimony. Several witnesses testified that they were present and saw Lee and the Indians kill the emigrants, but that they themselves had nothing to do with it. The names of the witnesses, together with their testimony, is a matter of court record in Beaver City.

Now it was twenty years from the massacre till the conviction of John D. Lee, and as the Mormons appeared to be so very anxious for the perpetrators to be found and punished, the question naturally arises, Why did not those witnesses bring the matter to light sooner? But all was kept in the dark as much as possible, until they saw that evidence was accumulating that would convict their leader and other high officials in the fraternity, and then they placed the entire responsibility upon Lee, who was made a scapegoat to save the church.

Lee pleaded innocence in court, but while in prison awaiting his execution made a full confession of the whole affair. He gave the names of forty odd Mormons who took part in the massacre, and said that Brigham Young was instigator of the whole proceeding. Lee was shot by five United States soldiers, and while seated on his coffin, just a moment before his execution, he still said that in killing the emigrants he was only acting under the orders of Brigham Young. Five true bills were secured against Young, but as his death occurred soon after, he was never brought to trial.

CHAPTER II

THE MORMON SACRED BOOKS

THE Mormons have two books besides the Bible which they regard as of divine origin; they are the "Book of Mormon," and the "Doctrine and Covenants," and are accepted by them as containing the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fullness—a perfect rule of faith and practice. A more extended notice of these books will be given in another chapter, but just here we will notice the Mormon view of the Bible.

In their Articles of Faith it is stated that they "believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is correctly translated," but they fail to inform us how much of it they regard as a mis-translation. Joseph Smith "translated" the Bible, as he claimed "by the power and authority of God." His work was in MS. awaiting publication at his death, but when the division of the church came at Nauvoo, the Josephites seized the MS. and left the unfortunate Brighamites to fall back upon the "faulty" King James translation. A few extracts from Smith's "translation," as they appear in some of their standard works, may be of interest.

Gen. 1:26, in the common version reads, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Smith translates, "And I, God, said unto mine Only Begotten, which was with me from

the beginning, let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and it was so.”¹

In the next place he “translates” something that is altogether foreign to anything found in the Bible. Here it is: “After Adam had been driven out of the garden, he began to till the earth, and to have dominion over all the beasts of the field, and to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, as I the Lord had commanded him. And he called upon the name of the Lord, and so did Eve, his wife, also. And they heard the voice of the Lord, from the way toward the garden of Eden, speaking unto them, and they saw him not, for they were shut out from his presence; and he gave unto them commandments that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of their flocks for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord. And after many days, an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying, Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him, I know not; save the Lord commanded me. And then the angel spake, saying, This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, who is full of grace and truth. And thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son for evermore. And in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son.”² This is a remarkable piece of Scripture building,

¹“Doctrine and Covenants,” p. 10.

² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

which Smith attempted to foist upon the book of Genesis.

Again, Exod. 33 : 20, which reads, "And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live," Smith "translates": "The Lord said unto Moses, Thou canst not see my face at this time, lest my anger be kindled against thee also, and I destroy thee and thy people. There shall no man among them see me at this time and live, for they are exceeding sinful, and no sinful man hath at any time [seen], neither shall there be any sinful man at any time that shall see my face and live."¹

From these extracts it is seen that there is much perverting of the Scriptures in the Joseph Smith "translation." But why should they cavil about the Bible in any way, since they claim to have other books that are so much better?

The truth of the whole matter is simply this: Mormonism discards the Bible as containing the plan of salvation for us. They accept it as true history, and the will of God to those to whom it was directly revealed, but that it is of no binding force to the people of this age of the world. This is plainly taught in the "Voice of Warning."² The very presence of the "Book of Mormon" and the "Doctrine and Covenants" as a substitute for the Bible, proves the correctness of this conclusion.

The position here taken will be more clearly understood as we come to notice their teachings

¹ "Items on Priesthood," by John Taylor, p. 10.

² By Parley P. Pratt, pp. 243, 244.

concerning Christ. They regard his earthly ministry as a failure, as is shown by the following: On page 16, of "Items on Priesthood," it is stated that John the Baptist came to effect a gospel restoration as foretold by the prophet Malachi; but the people "would not receive it; they beheaded John, and crucified Jesus; hence the restoration, the mission of Elias, was postponed until he appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple." Now, as is plainly seen, it is here stated that the death of John the Baptist and Jesus prevented a completion of the work that they came to do, and that it remained to be accomplished by Joseph Smith, thus plainly indicating that Smith was a greater man than Christ himself.

In the next place they teach that the kingdom of Christ was of short duration. In a chapter on the subject in the "Voice of Warning," beginning on p. 98 (Ed. of 1893), it is taught that the church and kingdom of Christ are one and the same thing, and that it was overcome by the powers of darkness, and ceased to exist among men at the cessation of the apostles and miracles. In short, their belief as to the religious state of the world when Smith introduced the "Book of Mormon," is expressed in the following language: "Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, every man walking in his own way, and looking for gain from his quarter, the Lord having for a long time held his peace, and the people having fondly flattered themselves that the voice of inspiration would never again sound in the ears of mortals to disturb or

molest them in their sinful career.”¹ This declares the whole world to be in gross heathenism; the church of Christ having apostatized, his kingdom been overcome by the powers of darkness, and his gospel taken from the earth, in which state it had remained “for the last seventeen hundred years.”² “But in these last days, God has again spoken from the heavens, and commissioned men to go first to the Gentiles, commanding them everywhere to repent and obey the gospel; and then he has commanded them to go to the Jews also, and to command them to repent and obey the gospel; thus restoring again that which has been so long lost from the earth.”³

It is plainly seen from these extracts, that Mormons attempt to rob Christ of the honor, the power, and the glory so justly due his holy name, and confer it all upon the man, Joseph Smith. Other quotations along this line might be made, but enough are here given to satisfy any candid mind that there is no Christ in Mormonism; and it is strange that they worship in his name, and in his name prophesy, and pretend to do miracles. But such are the characters, of whom we are warned in Matt. 7 : 15-23 : “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. . . Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to

¹ “Voice of Warning,” p. 131. ² *Ibid.*, p. 238.

³ “Voice of Warning,” p. 240.

me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? . . . and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Now, in order that we may fully appreciate the great magnitude and durability of our Saviour's work on earth in giving to the world the plan of redemption, and that we might see more clearly the absurdity of the Mormon position, as above stated, let us take a more extended view of the points mentioned, in the light of the living word.

God has made but "two covenants"¹ of a general nature with his people—"the one from the Mount Sinai," and the other on Mount Calvary. The nature of these covenants is given in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and especially at the eighth chapter, where the first is mentioned as "the old covenant," and "ready to vanish away"; for, being imperfect it must of necessity be supplanted by a perfect covenant, "established upon better promises" than that contained in the law; for the plan of salvation must be a perfect plan. Thus, the old covenant was not perpetual, but was typical of the new; and "when the fulness of the time was come," that is, when God in his wisdom, saw that the world was ready for "the dispensation of the fulness of times,"² he "sent forth his Son, . . . to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."³

The Son of God, whose coming is thus de-

¹ Gal. 4 : 24.

² Eph. 1 : 10.

³ Gal. 4 : 4, 5

scribed, was “God manifest in the flesh” —perfect God, and perfect man—and such being his highly exalted nature, we cannot regard his work as being anything short of a perfect work. He is the greatest being that ever dwelt in mortal flesh, and his advent and ministry in the world are the grandest events of all ages. They elicited the deepest interest of prophets and angels, who desired to look into the grandeur of his work;² it called forth a most wonderful display of the glory of God at his birth and on the mount of transfiguration; the voice of the Divine Father himself being heard from heaven, attesting the Messiahship of the Son, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”³

He set up his spiritual kingdom—the reign of grace—which is to stand forever, for it was “not left to other people,” but Christ himself is king supreme, and there is no power under heaven that can dethrone him, nor take his kingdom from among men. The promise to him was that it should be an everlasting kingdom.

He instituted his church, the organization of the citizens of his spiritual kingdom, which should triumph over the powers of darkness, for he has declared that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”⁴

He did all that the Father sent him to do,⁵ and while expiring on the cross he exclaimed, “It is finished”;⁶ and now, as a result, we have the New Covenant of our Lord and Saviour Jesus

¹ 1 Tim. 3 : 16. ² Luke 10 : 24 ; 1 Peter 1 : 12. ³ Matt. 3 : 17.

⁴ Matt. 16 : 18.

⁵ John 17 : 4.

⁶ John 19 : 30.

Christ—the perfect work of the perfect Redeemer, the plan of salvation full and complete.¹

He purchased redemption for the world, and sealed the new and everlasting covenant with his own precious blood.² He came forth triumphant over the grave, and ascending up on high, “he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men,” and is there enthroned, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as our Mediator, Prophet, Priest, and King for evermore.

Such is the nature, briefly stated, of our highly exalted Saviour, and of the gospel that he has given us, which cannot be slightly regarded, added to, nor taken from, for those who do such things shall suffer the judgments of God.³ And now, with these solemn truths before us, the idea that the gospel as contained in the Scriptures is imperfect, and of no force at this age of the world, or that the work of Christ had failed, or could fail in the least particular, is too irreverent and too unreasonable to be entertained for a moment.

The farther we go with this investigation the more preposterous the Mormon position appears. It is simply a shifting from the sure foundation of Christ to the sandy foundation of Antichrist—a descent “from the sublime to the ridiculous.” It has no connection whatever with the Christian religion, and the wonder is that Mormons even attempt to cling to Christ at all; for by so doing they act very inconsistently. If they have discovered another foundation that is surer than Christ,

¹ 2 Tim. 3 : 15. ² Heb. 13 : 20. ³ Rev. 22 : 18, 19.

let them stand upon it, and if Joseph Smith has revealed to them a better gospel than that given us in the Bible, let them abide by it. But there is this result: by so doing, they bring upon themselves the condemnation of Almighty God, for the divine word plainly says, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." And in order to make the assurance doubly sure, in warning the unprincipled impostor of his certain and fearful doom, the apostle repeats, saying, "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."¹

¹Gal. 1 : 8, 9.

CHAPTER III

THE BOOK OF MORMON

THE "Book of Mormon," most commonly known as the Mormon Bible, is a religious romance, purporting to be a history of the ancient inhabitants of the American continent, but is accepted by the Mormons as the word of God. It is so stated in their Articles of Faith. The author of the book is unknown, although on the title-page of the first edition Joseph Smith's name appears as author.¹ It is supposed by some to have been written by Sidney Rigdon, who was Joseph Smith's first counselor. Its theology agrees with his as announced before the book was published. His peculiar connections also with the Mormon Church would indicate his authorship. The author, whoever he was, evidently drew much of his inspiration from the Spaulding manuscript. But my object in this chapter is not so much to discuss the authorship of the "Book of Mormon" as to show that it is not of divine origin. This may be easily done by reference to the contents of the book itself.

In size it is hardly as large as the Old Testament, and is composed of fifteen different books, which are arranged somewhat after the order of the different books of the Bible.

¹ The Golden Bible (Lamb), p. 75.

Fourteen of these books were written as an inspired history of the remote ancestors of the American Indians, beginning with their origin, and extending over a period of one thousand years—from 600 B. C. to A. D. 400. It says that the Indians are of Jewish descent, and that their progenitors came from Jerusalem at the earliest date above mentioned. Soon after their arrival in America, a part of the leading family incurred the displeasure of God, by their wickedness, to the extent that a curse was put upon them. In consequence of this the color of their skin was changed, making them “a dark and loathsome people.” Thus, from the one family sprang two separate and distinct races; those bearing the seers, which are called Lamanites, after Laman, their representative head; and the Nephites, so called in honor of Nephi, a righteous brother of Laman. These two races are mentioned as having multiplied until they had become very great nations, but by destructive wars that were often waged between the two, the Nephites were finally overcome by the Lamanites, and exterminated from the face of the earth.

The remaining book in the volume, the “Book of Ether,” was written as a brief history of still another race that inhabited America prior to those before mentioned. These are said to have come from the Tower of Babel at the dispersion, and also multiplied and spread upon the land to a great extent. By internal wars they were exterminated root and branch, just before the first-named party arrived from Jerusalem.

It is claimed that the histories of these several races were written upon gold plates, in a language peculiar to themselves, and that the plates were collected and buried in the earth about A. D. 400, by one Moroni, who was the last surviving one of the Nephites. Joseph Smith claimed that this Moroni appeared to him as an angel from heaven, and told him of the hidden plates, which he obtained and translated into English by the power of inspiration.

In the outset it was asserted that the "Book of Mormon" was a fictitious work. An effort will now be made to produce the proof necessary to substantiate the assertion.

In the first place, as has already been shown, the volume is composed of fifteen different books. They were written as if by eleven men, who lived at different periods of its history; but we find the style of the writing to be the same throughout the entire volume.

Now it is apparent to every reader, even of ordinary care, that men differ in their style of writing. Especially is this true of men living at different ages, as language and its idioms are constantly undergoing changes. This is clearly manifest in the different books of the Bible. Each one of the inspired writers, from Moses to John, delivered the divine message in the style peculiar to himself and the age in which he lived. The difference between some of them is very marked; and this is a very strong proof in support of the divine authenticity of the Bible. And now, if the "Book of Mormon" were a true history, as a matter

of course it would bear a corresponding difference in the style of its different portions.

Another point that proves it to be the production of only one man, is that it contains certain peculiar and quaint expressions, such as "He cried mightily unto the Lord," and "the meek and lowly in heart," and "with real intent of heart," and "the course of God is one eternal round," and "in the arms of his love," and many other like expressions which appear in every division of the volume.

It contains many quotations from the Bible, especially from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Malachi, and perhaps from every book in the New Testament, some of which are very copious and all of which seem to show one controlling purpose.

Now, as has been shown, it is claimed that the book was written here on the Western Continent, from 600 B. C. to A. D. 400, while as we all know, the Bible was written in the East, and as there was substantially no communication between the two continents at that period, the imaginary historian could have had no means of making quotations therefrom. Nearly half of Isaiah's prophecy, however, is reproduced, and at one place thirteen chapters, from the second to the fourteenth inclusive, are copied in regular order. These are found on pages 87-104, and on pages 532-534. Two chapters are copied from Malachi; and on pages 504-511, our Lord's Sermon on the Mount¹ is reproduced. In addition are extracts from various parts of the Bible in great profusion.

¹ Matt. 5 : 7.

On pages 621, 622 is found a corruption of the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians, and on page 615 we find the following almost wholly the same as the familiar thirteenth of First Corinthians: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

The book contains many prophecies, and while those referring to events prior to the organization of the Mormon Church are very plain, those referring to time beyond that period are very meagre and obscure. A specimen prophecy of the coming of Christ, professedly written about five hundred years before his advent, will be of interest. It reads as follows:

"Behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven, among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay, and shall go forth amongst men, working mighty miracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the lame to walk, the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and curing all manner of diseases; and he shall cast out devils, or the evil spirits which dwell in the hearts of the children of men. And lo, he shall suffer temptation, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold blood cometh from every pore, so great

shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people. And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things, from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary. And lo, he cometh unto his own, that salvation might come unto the children of men, even through faith on his name; and even after all this, they shall consider him a man, and say that he hath a devil, and shall scourge him, and shall crucify him. And he shall rise the third day from the dead, and behold he standeth to judge the world.”¹

For exactness as to details this rivals the plainest prophecy of the Old Testament, and plainly discloses the hand of imposition.

Other points might be adduced, but enough has been given to show most conclusively that the “Book of Mormon” is a fictitious work. It is of a low order of composition; in doctrine it is heretical, and it contains nothing of moral worth beyond its Bible quotations. The author discloses an ignorance even of United States history, for he says on pages 151 and 590, that the horse and the ass were kept by the Nephites; while the truth of the matter is, the horse was first introduced into America by the Spaniards soon after its discovery by Columbus, and the first ass in America was imported from Europe by George Washington.

The points made in this chapter against the divine authenticity of the “Book of Mormon” are

“Book of Mormon,” pp. 167, 168.

unanswerable. It is a strange thing that so many accept it as the word of God; but it only shows the weakness of the finite mind and the greatness of human credulity.

CHAPTER IV

THE BOOK OF "DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS"

THIS book is composed mainly of Joseph Smith's revelations and prophecies, and is also accepted by the Mormons as the word of God. It is their main book, as the title indicates, for it is their foundation, authority, and rule of faith and practice. It is not mentioned in their Articles of Faith, nor is it often offered for sale to the "Gentile" public. This is for the very obvious reason, that its doctrine is so objectionable, that it is deemed best to keep it in the background as much as possible. Hence and for this reason the public knows little about the book.

The author of this book evidently drew much of his inspiration from the "Book of Mormon," but did not confine himself strictly to its doctrine. It appears, however, that in the outset his intention was to keep within the bounds of the creed set forth in the "Book of Mormon," for on page 122 he says by "revelation" that it contains "the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, and to the Jews also." But having cut loose from the safe moorings of the Bible, to follow the inclinations of his own mind, and to accept every new idea as a divine revelation, he soon found himself on a boundless sea. Revelations heaped themselves upon him in great profusion, and those

oftentimes of a most contradictory character. He advances the doctrine of baptism for the dead, marrying for eternity, the man-god doctrine, blood atonement, the temple work, polygamy, and many other features, upon which the "Book of Mormon" is entirely silent. The exception of polygamy, however, must be made, for this is condemned in very strong terms. It says, on page 132, that "David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord; . . . Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord; for there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none." In contradiction to the above the "Doctrine and Covenants" says that David and Solomon did right in having many wives and concubines, and that a man may have ten wives and be accepted with God.¹ In part, they do not even attempt to harmonize the two, but argue that it is right for the Mormons to practise polygamy, but that it was wrong for the Nephites. But the argument is very weak, for God's moral law never changes. What is essentially right or wrong in one age, and for one people, is essentially right or wrong in all ages, and for all people. As polygamy involves an essential moral principle, it must be either right or wrong in all times. Therefore, if it was wrong for the Nephites, it was and is wrong for the Mormons.

The first "revelation" given in the "Doctrine

¹ Pp. 469, 473.

and Covenants," is dated July, 1828, and the last, Smith's famous "polygamy revelation," is dated July 12, 1843. From the first to the last is disclosed a marked tendency to a life of corruption, which had its culmination in the last-named revelation.

Some of Smith's prophecies, as given in the "Doctrine and Covenants," may interest our readers. We find that he made a fatal venture in the prophetic line. The first we notice is one concerning the building of a temple in Far West, Mo.

"Let the City, Far West, be a holy and consecrated land unto me, and it shall be called most holy, for the ground upon which thou standest is holy; therefore I command you to build an house unto me, for the gathering together of my saints, that they may worship me, and let there be a beginning of this work, and a foundation, and preparatory work, this following summer (1838), and let the beginning be made on the 4th day of July, next, and from that time forth let my people labor diligently to build an house unto my name; and in one year from this day let them recommence laying the foundation of my house; thus let them from that time forth labor diligently until it shall be finished, from the corner stone thereof unto the top thereof until there shall not anything remain that is not finished." This prophecy was made sixty years ago, and, as is seen, was to have been fulfilled at once, but like the author's "New Jerusalem," the "house unto my name" was never built.

On page 304, is Smith's "Revelation and Prophecy on War," dated December 25, 1832.

This prophecy is very noted in Mormon circles as having been fulfilled, but it is the only one of Smith's prophecies that is referred to by them with any degree of pride. It reads as follows:

“Verily, thus saith the Lord concerning the wars that will shortly come to pass, beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina, which will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls. The day will come that wars will be poured out upon all nations, beginning at that place; for behold the Southern States shall be divided against the Northern States, and the Southern States will call on other nations, even the nation of Great Britain, as it is called, and they shall also call upon other nations, in order to defend themselves against other nations; and thus war shall be poured out upon all nations. . . And thus with the sword and by bloodshed, the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn; and with famine, and plague, and earthquakes, and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightnings also, shall the inhabitants of the earth be made to feel the wrath, and indignations, and chastening hand of an Almighty God, until the consumption decreed hath made a full end of all nations.”

The rebellion of South Carolina referred to in the above prophecy, was evidently that of November, 1832. The Anti-Tariff Convention had issued the Nullification ordinance, and South Carolina entered a vigorous protest. President Jackson issued a proclamation against the rebels, and sent a fleet of war vessels into Charleston harbor. Governor Hayne, of South Carolina, defied the

president, and his army and navy, in a counter-proclamation. So it seemed as if war was inevitable; and therefore a very opportune time for Smith's war prophecy. It did not come, however, and hence the prophecy failed. If the prophecy is applied to South Carolina's last rebellion, we find that it is also a failure, for "other nations" did not become involved, neither was war "poured out upon all nations," and furthermore, those devastating judgments that should "make a full end of all nations" did not follow. So we conclude that even Smith's famous war prophecy was not a conspicuous success.

Many other prophecies are given in Smith's book of revelations, but reference to one other will be sufficient for our purpose. It is his prophecy concerning the end of time. This is given on page 461, "Doctrine and Covenants," and reads as follows: "I was once praying very earnestly to know the time of the coming of the Son of Man, when I heard a voice, repeat the following: 'Joseph, my son, if thou livest until thou art eighty-five years old, thou shalt see the face of the Son of Man: therefore let this suffice, and trouble me no more on this matter!' I was left thus without being able to decide whether this coming referred to the millennium, or to some previous appearing, or whether I should die and thus see his face. I believe the coming of the Son of Man will not be any sooner than that time." This prophecy is indefinite, but a marginal note on the same page referring to another "prophecy of Joseph, uttered March 14, 1835, says: "Even fifty-six years should wind

up the scene." Now fifty-six years from 1835 bring us to 1891, the year in which Smith would have been eighty-five years old, had he lived, and the year in which the Mormons looked for the end of time.

Now, let us apply the divine rule to the prophet Joseph and see the result. Here it is, in Deut. 18 : 20-22 : " But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." Comment on this scripture would be unnecessary, as it is plainly seen that by it Joseph Smith takes his place among the false prophets.

Mention has been made previously of the failure of some of Smith's prophecies concerning the settlement of his followers in the State of Missouri, and the Mormons' method of explaining the failure of these prophecies is that their enemies, by driving them from the State, prevented their fulfillment. This excuse is very feeble, of course, but it is the best they have to offer. God is not a creature of circumstances, neither does the fulfillment of his word hinge upon contingencies. Having all knowledge, he knows beforehand all the most minute circumstances of every nature, that are to

accompany and surround the fulfillment of his word; and having all power he is able to bring it to pass. Therefore when he authorizes a man to prophesy in his name, the thing thus foretold is sure to come to pass, and all earth and hell combined cannot prevent it unless, as in the case of Nineveh; God himself shall see fit to avert the end foretold. "God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"¹

¹ Num. 23 : 19.

CHAPTER V

THE PRIESTHOOD

THE priesthood is the ruling power in the Mormon Church. Joseph Smith claimed that the apostles Peter, James, and John appeared to him as angels, and conferred upon him the Melchisedec priesthood, and that John the Baptist also appeared to him in like form, and conferred the Aaronic priesthood. He then conferred it, in its different orders, upon his followers. The Mormons claim that a man cannot be saved without holding some office in the priesthood, and that there is always a supernatural power attending those who hold it; and the higher the order, the greater the power and glory. There are at least seventy per cent. of them ordained to some office in the priesthood. As to its power, it is outlined by Joseph Smith in the following manner: "The power and authority of the higher, or Melchisedec priesthood, is to hold the keys of the spiritual blessings of the church; to have the privileges of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; to have the heavens opened unto them to commune with the general assembly and church of the first born, and to enjoy the communication and presence of God the Father."¹

¹ "Doctrine and Covenants," p. 385.

Now, as to the nature and extent of the true priesthood, we find, by consulting the Scriptures, that it was an office, which was created for the performance of certain duties pertaining to sin offerings, and that it ended among men when the last and great sacrifice was made. The Aaronic priesthood was created for the performance of the work of the ceremonial law; the main duty of which was the offering of sacrifices for the sins of the people. Aaron and his descendants, who were of the tribe of Levi, were set apart to this office, hence it is called the Aaronic priesthood. This office was created under the Mosaic dispensation, and it was in force as long as that dispensation was in force; but when the old covenant was abolished at the institution of the new covenant, the dispensation of grace, then were the works of the old dispensation at an end, and consequently the Aaronic priesthood was also abolished, for there was no more work for those holding it to perform. We do not find any mention made in the New Testament Scriptures of the disciples of Christ having been ordained to either the Aaronic or Melchisedec priesthoods. Christ himself was "made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec," and being prepared a sacrifice for the sins of fallen humanity, he offered himself upon the cross as an atonement for the sins of the whole world, "once for all." Having "sat down on the right hand of God," and having "an unchangeable priesthood, he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

A priest is a mediator, standing between God and man, offering sacrifices to God for the sins of the people. In this capacity the sons of Levi stood while holding the Aaronic priesthood; in this capacity Melchisedec stood, who received tithes of Abraham and blessed him, and in this capacity Jesus is to-day the mediator of the new covenant.

As to the "powers and blessings of the priesthood," as indicated in quotations from "Doctrine and Covenants," we may say that these have not the slightest sanction of Scripture. The Mormons teach that the prophets and apostles held the Melchisedec priesthood, and by virtue of that they received supernatural power. No mention, however, is made in the Bible of any one holding this office except Melchisedec himself and Jesus Christ, who was made a priest after his order. Hence, we conclude that the Mormon priesthood originated either in Joseph Smith's own mind, or was borrowed by him from some one equally perverse, and is therefore a fraud and an imposition, unworthy of the toleration of intelligent people.

The offices in the Mormon priesthood are those of apostles, prophets, seventies, high priests, bishops, elders, priests, teachers, and deacons. Some of these offices we shall here notice in order to show that the Scriptures are perverted, and the office misapplied.

As to the office of an apostle, it was temporary, and "is allowed by all to have been confined to those immediately commissioned by Christ to witness to the fact of his resurrection from the dead, and to reveal the complete system of Christian

doctrine and duty. Their extraordinary commission was confirmed by miracles wrought by themselves." That the apostles were personal witnesses for Christ is plainly shown by the following words spoken by him to them: "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."¹ It was also shown in the selection of an apostle to succeed Judas, the traitor, respecting which the Apostle Peter used these words: "Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection."²

It is already evident, therefore, that their calling as apostles was to publish the gospel to the world just as they had received it in person from Christ, having been eye-witnesses of his miracles, and of his resurrection and ascension. Moreover, not only were they to publish the gospel to that generation, but to all succeeding generations, which duty they performed by writing the New Testament Scriptures. In order that they might perform this duty aright, Jesus gave them this special promise: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you."³ Under the special guidance of the Holy Spirit, the apostles wrote, and as a result we have their inspired writ-

¹ Acts 1 : 8.² Acts 1 : 22.³ John 14 : 26.

ings, which stand to all the world as living witnesses for Christ.

There is a passage of Scripture relating to this office that is much perverted by the Mormons. It is Eph. 4:11, which says: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." The punctuation of this passage suggests the following paraphrase: "And he gave to some people, apostles; and to others, prophets," etc. As the past tense of the verb is used, it precludes an application to the future. Prophets were given under the Mosaic economy—"The law and the prophets were until John"¹—and apostles were given at the ushering in of the Christian dispensation. Hence, we conclude that the Mormon apostles are not apostles of Christ, but are apostles of Joseph Smith, of whom they testify.

As to the office of the seventies, the Mormons have two quorums. In this, also, they attempt to pattern after the early church; but in so doing they not only misapply the office, but make a most woful blunder as to the meaning of our Saviour's language concerning the seventy whom he called and sent forth to preach the gospel. The seventy are mentioned but once in the New Testament, and that is in Luke 10:1. In the preceding chapter an account is given of the sending forth of the Twelve, with the command to "preach the kingdom of heaven," and as the work progressed, there was an increased demand

¹ Luke 16:16.

for laborers: "The Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come." It is plain to be seen that these were appointed in connection with the Twelve, and not as a second quorum of seventies; and furthermore, it is clearly evident that the seventy did not constitute a separate and distinct office in the church.

The elders are mainly their missionaries, about two thousand of whom are now traveling in America, Europe, and Asia, making a house to house canvass, and distributing literature setting forth what they term, "the first principles of the gospel." These elders make a vain attempt to observe the first commission, as given by Christ to the twelve and the seventy. They go two and two, and claim to travel without money, and receive no money for their missionary work.

Now as to the pay, the "Doctrine and Covenants" provides that the traveling elders shall be paid out of the church tithing funds, but does not stipulate the amount. As to their traveling without money, it may be said that the claim is false, for it is a well-known fact that many of them do carry it. I have it from good Mormon authority that a two years' mission costs each elder an average of three hundred dollars. This money goes mainly for railroad fare and for goods, while the missionary in the main receives free entertainment.

As has been stated, the Mormons attempt to observe our Saviour's first commission, but ignore the last. Now let us notice the two commissions just a little and see wherein the Mormons have erred.

By reference to Matt. 10 : 5, 6, it will be seen that the first commission was confined to the Jews, while as to the last commission Mark 14 : 15 says, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Hence it is plainly seen that the first was limited, both as to time and the people to whom it applied, while the last is unlimited and universal. And as to the pecuniary preparations necessary for the journey, there was a change from that of the first commission, as the following from Luke 22 : 35, 36, will show: "And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip." In the first commission, the apostles, who were of the Jews, were sent to preach to their own people; but in the last commission, they were to go among strangers and foreigners; hence appears the necessity for some pecuniary preparations for their journey.

But the truth of the matter is, Mormons do not regard either commission as of any binding force. Their commission is given at a much later date, and from an entirely different source. They deny a call to the ministry by direct operation of the Holy Spirit, but claim that their prophet has the sole power to call and commission preachers. As a Bible proof that their method of calling preachers is right, they refer to Heb. 5 : 4, which says: "And no man taketh this however unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron." This they take as a rule by which all preachers were to

be called for all time to come ; but in this passage there is no allusion to a call to the ministry, but to the office of the priesthood. The leading subject here treated is the priesthood of Christ, who was "made an high priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec," and reference was had to the Aaronic priesthood, which was of a lower order, to show that no man was allowed to share in its honors without divine appointment. "God himself appointed the tribe and family out of which the high priest was to be taken, and Aaron and his sons were expressly chosen by God to fill the office of the high priesthood. As God had the right to appoint his own priest for the Jewish nations, and man had no authority here, so God alone could provide and appoint a high priest for the whole human race. Aaron was thus appointed for the Jewish people, Christ for all mankind." And as the Aaronic priesthood was abolished at the coming of Christ, there is, therefore, no more call to that office ; hence, the Mormon claims along this line are altogether unfounded in truth.

The following is the Mormon method of calling their missionaries: The president of the church, who is the leading prophet, informs his bishops of the different wards or settlements, that he now wants a given number of men from each to send on missions to preach the gospel. The bishops respond to the command of their president by sending him the required list of names of suitable persons. These are then appointed by the president on the recommendation of the bishops, and ordered out to their respective fields of labor.

These calls frequently take the elders by surprise. An elder, who is traveling in Mississippi, was recently heard to say that when he received the letter from his president, containing his call and commission to go on a mission to the Southern States, it was to him like a bolt from the clear sky. He had never thought of preaching, and in fact had no desire to preach; but as the call was from his prophet, it was divine, and therefore must be obeyed. This elder received his call to the ministry by mail.

As to the moral character of the elders, it may be said of some that it is rather questionable. While in Colorado I was on one occasion in company with some of the "Saints," who were expressing some anxiety as to the welfare of some of their bad boys. They wanted them reformed, but did not know just how it might be done. A lifelong Mormon from Utah, who stood in high official ranks in the church, was present, who suggested that they be sent on a mission to preach the gospel. This, he said, had often been done in Utah, and with good results, for when they go among strangers and enemies they have to behave themselves.

The elders, on going among the people, bear a strong testimony, not for Christ, but of the "truthfulness of Mormonism," declaring that they received the knowledge of its truthfulness by revelation from God; and they also declare that by the same gift they know that Joseph Smith was a true prophet. These assertions they make, with great boldness, but fail of course to accompany the as-

sertion with the necessary proof. Now whenever God gave his inspired servants a message to deliver to the people in Bible times, he always gave them power to give the people some evidence in proof of the truthfulness of the message; therefore, we conclude that if the elders were inspired with a special message, as they claim, of course they could prove it; and if they could they would, for no argument could be produced that would be of greater force than the working of a miracle; but in the absence of such no thoughtful person will accept a bare assertion of divine appointment and divine inspiration.

CHAPTER VI

MIRACLES

THE Mormons claim the power to work miracles. They argue that this power always accompanies the gift of the Holy Spirit, and that faith in miracles constitutes a part of the gospel. This doctrine is made very prominent. They always put it foremost with all the stress possible, but in its support they make a most woful misapplication of the Scriptures. They refer to our Saviour's word to his apostles wherein he said: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove: and nothing shall be impossible unto you."¹ And again: "These signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."² But, without considering the purposes of God in conferring this power, they conclude that it was to continue with the believer until the end of the world.³

¹ Matt. 17 : 20.

² Mark 16 : 17, 18.

³ They make no account, moreover, of the fact, that the authenticity of this passage, upon which so much is based, is by very many eminent scholars called into serious question.

Now that signs followed the believer, is true; and that they continued to follow the believer until the purposes of God were accomplished for which they were given, and then ceased to follow, is also true, which may be abundantly proven. But that the Mormons have the power to perform miracles, or that it is necessary, or even possible for them to exercise such power, they have never proven, neither can it be so proven, for the facts are all against them. True, they produce quite a list of testimonials to the working of miracles, but on investigation we find them to be either acts of Providence, apart from any influence of theirs, or events that were simply unusual or wonderful interpreted as miracles, or else they were altogether counterfeit.

The following is a circumstance that came under my observation, and will illustrate the way they manufacture testimonials to the miraculous. A Mormon in Mississippi sent a communication to his paper in Utah for publication, stating that a couple of Mormon elders, while on a mission, were stopping at night with a certain family, and while there a mob assembled with the intention of doing them harm. By a divine inspiration it was said the mob was stricken with fear, and dispersed without accomplishing their object. The elders were therefore miraculously protected. A friend of the writer chanced to see his communication as it appeared in the paper, and asked where the circumstance occurred. His reply was, "Nowhere in particular, but such things have occurred, and may do so again." Here is a bogus miracle. It

is so admitted to be by the author, but is doubtless referred to by the "Saints" in other places as being real.

But we pass on to a closer investigation of the subject. A theological definition of a miracle is, that it is an effect, or an event, seemingly above the recognized established constitution of things, or a suspension of the known laws of nature. The turning of Aaron's rod into a serpent when cast upon the ground in the presence of Pharaoh, was a miracle; for it is contrary to the laws of nature for a stick of wood to be changed into a serpent. The dividing of the waters of the Red Sea, which stood back on either side, forming dry ground for the passage of the children of Israel, was a miracle, for water, beneath the laws of nature, does not divide as that is represented to have done. For the sick of various diseases who were healed by our Saviour, the prophets, and apostles, to be restored instantly to perfect health and strength, was a miracle, because nature, even when assisted by medical skill, does not work an instant recovery. Throughout the entire list of miracles given in the Bible, it may be thus shown that they were wrought by some law above that known law of nature applicable to each case.

All miracles are performed by the special power of God, either by himself or through his creatures as his agents. He, as the Creator of all things and the Supreme Legislator of the universe, has absolute control of the laws by which all things are governed, and therefore he has the sole power either to maintain or suspend those laws at his own

will. No finite creatures have the power to work a miracle in the true sense of that term. "They can perform no work of creation, for this, throughout the Scriptures, is constantly attributed to God, and is appealed to by him as the proof of his own divinity, in opposition to idols, and to all beings whatever. "To whom will ye liken me, or shall I be equal, saith the Holy One? Lift up your eyes on high and behold who hath created these things!" This claim must cut off from every other being the power of creating, that is, of making something out of nothing; and being devoid of the power to create, he is devoid of power over the laws of creation. No sign, therefore, nor wonder which implies creation, or the suspension of its laws, is possible to finite beings. Not even the devil himself has the power to work miracles, unless it be by permission from God. However, he may perform many "lying signs and wonders"; but he could not take Job's property, nor afflict his person, without God's permission, and Job's life being denied him, he had not the power to take it; neither could the legions of devils even enter the swine until Jesus gave them permission.

The prophets and apostles did not claim the power within themselves to work miracles, but were merely agents in the hand of God, and used for a special purpose.

Miracles are external evidences, given as credentials of those whom the Bible represents as sent of God. They were wrought by his inspired messengers in proof of their authority, and to emphasize the truthfulness of the message that

they delivered. In 1 Cor. 12 miracles are called "gifts of the Spirit"; and in Mark 16 the gifts of the Spirit are called "signs," and in the last verse of this chapter we learn that the purpose of these signs was to "confirm the word."

Just before our Lord's ascension he gave his apostles the Great Commission to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," with the promise that certain signs, or supernatural evidences, should follow, or be performed by them that believed. "So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth [that is, the apostles], and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following."¹ And again, in Heb. 2: 3, 4, it is said: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" We learn from these passages that the word of salvation, or the gospel, was first spoken by the Lord himself, and then the word was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, who were the apostles; and that this confirmation was made sure by the witness of God's miraculous power; and furthermore, that God did not do those miracles merely according to the will of men, but "according to his own will."

¹ Mark 16: 19, 20.

A man might exercise all the faith in God that is possible, and pray for and contend for the power to do miracles all the days of his life, but as long as it is God's will to withhold the power, his prayers will all be in vain.

We should be very careful not to confound the "gifts of the Spirit" with the "fruit of the Spirit"; nor to mistake the one for the other. The apostle says that "The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth,"¹ and again, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."² These constitute the ordinary and permanent fruit of the Holy Spirit, and they are manifested in the life of every true Christian; while miracles are nowhere called fruits of the Spirit, but gifts of the Spirit, which were extraordinary and temporary, having been given for a special purpose.

The Apostle Paul, having enumerated the various gifts of the Spirit in 1 Cor. 12, and having admonished the Corinthian brethren to covet earnestly the best gifts, says, "And yet shew I unto you a more excellent way," and then in the thirteenth chapter he informs us that the more excellent way is "charity," which is the love of God, the fundamental principle of all true religion, and without which the gifts of the Spirit were altogether unprofitable. "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease;

¹ Eph. 5 : 9.

² Gal. 5 : 22, 23.

whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" (ver. 8). The three gifts here cited as specimens of the whole class of gifts, being "in part" were "done away." "A primary fulfillment of St. Paul's statement took place when the church attained its maturity; then tongues entirely ceased, and prophesying and knowledge, so far as they were supernatural gifts of the Spirit, were superseded as no longer required, when the ordinary preaching of the word, and the Scriptures of the New Testament collected, had become an established institution." The extraordinary gifts having passed away, there "now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity." These three are necessary and sufficient for salvation at all times, whereas the extraordinary gifts are not at all so.

Now let us take a more extended view of the purpose of miracles. The great central doctrine of the Old Testament is the absolute sovereignty of the one only true God, and that he demands the entire worship and adoration of his creatures. This doctrine God sought to establish among his people by manifestations of his miraculous power, to the exclusion of idolatry.

Moses was the first Bible historian. He lived about twenty-five hundred years after the creation, according to the received chronology. God had a righteous people on the earth from Adam to Moses, but we have no account of any miracles having been performed by human agency in all this period of time. God revealed himself to his servants, the patriarchs, from time to time, but the word so re-

vealed was not written so far as we know. God's word was most probably preserved by tradition, and thus it was handed down from father to son, from one generation to another. By this imperfect method of preserving the word of God, as a natural consequence it soon became corrupted, and in course of time the nations of the earth to a great extent lost the knowledge of God and lapsed into heathenism. At the time of Moses they had gone largely into idolatry. Having forgotten the Creator they worshiped the creature.

By Moses the revealed word began to be written; and through him, God made known his mighty power. God had set his hand to free his people from the Egyptian bondage, and to establish his name in Israel; and in order to turn them from their idols and direct their worship toward the God of heaven, he caused his miraculous power to be made known among them. In idolatry they had many gods, but Moses taught them that there was but one God, who had power over their idols, which power was so wonderfully displayed in the plagues of Egypt.

“The wonders wrought in Egypt by the hand of Moses were pointedly directed against the senseless and abominable idolatries of that devoted country, and were manifestly designed to expose their absurdity and falsehood, as well as to effect the deliverance of God's people, Israel. The subsequent miracles in the desert had an evident tendency to wean the Israelites from an attachment to the false deities of the surrounding nations, and to instruct them in figurative representations in that

better covenant established upon better promises, of which the Mosaic institute was designed to be a shadow and a type. The settlement of the Israelites in Canaan under their leader, Joshua, and their continuance in it for a long succession of ages, were accompanied with a series of wonders, all operating to that one purpose of the Almighty, the separation of his people from a wicked and apostate world, and preservation of a chosen seed, through whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Every miracle wrought under the Jewish theocracy appears to have been intended either to correct the superstitions and appetites of the neighboring nations, or to bring them to a conviction that the Lord Jehovah was the true God, and that beside him there was none other; or to reclaim the Jews, whenever they betrayed a disposition to relapse into heathenish abominations and to forsake the true religion, which the Almighty was pledged to uphold throughout all ages, and for the completion of which he was then, in his infinite wisdom, arranging all human events."

God had chosen the Jewish nation as his people on account of their peculiar fitness to bear his oracles to the world, and as his purpose was to establish his name first with this people, he continued to make known his mighty power among them until his purpose was accomplished, which was fully effected about the time of their return from the Babylonian captivity. Then it was that the Jews were entirely weaned from their idols and accepted the doctrine of one God; and then it was that miracles, performed by human agency, most

probably ceased among them. While it is true, they afterward lapsed into formalism and Phariseism and as a nation refused to accept Christ as a Redeemer, yet from the time of their return from the Babylonian captivity to the present day, they have never relapsed into absolute idolatry.

We now come to notice the confirmation of the gospel. In the fullness of time Christ came into human life. He took upon himself a body and appeared as man. He was "God manifest in the flesh." For him to merely tell the people that he was the Son of God, the world's Redeemer, was insufficient to establish the fact; neither was it enough for others to testify of him, as did John the Baptist. It was necessary that he give some external evidences in proof of his Messiahship. This he did in his wonderful miracles performed throughout his ministry. He demonstrated his power over disease by healing many who were brought to him; he demonstrated his power over the elements by turning water into wine and by calming the storm; by feeding the vast multitudes with but a few loaves and two small fishes, he showed his creative power; and his power over departed spirits, by calling the dead to life. He demonstrated his power over the evil one by casting out demons, and over the grave by taking up his own body and ascending triumphantly into heaven. All his miracles were wrought by his own inherent power and were clearly above human agency or natural causes. They were public; they were such as could not admit of collusion or deception; they were performed under such cir-

cumstances as rendered it impossible for the witnesses and reporters of them to mistake; they were often worked in the presence of malignant, scrutinizing, intelligent enemies, the Jewish rulers, who acknowledged the facts, but attributed them to an evil agency. From the day in which they were wrought down to ours the testimony to their authenticity remains unbroken.

Our Saviour did not require even John the Baptist to take his word without some evidence, for when John, as it seems, had become doubtful while in prison and sent two of his disciples to Jesus to know if he was the Messiah, he did not send them away immediately with instructions to tell John that he was the Christ, and thus bid him expel all his doubts, but in that hour he did many wonderful miracles. Then turning to John's disciples he said, "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached." ¹

By these miracles which he did in the midst of the people, he was approved of God, as the Apostle Peter declared on the day of Pentecost, saying: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." ² By those signs many were led to believe in him. On one occasion, "When he was

¹ Luke 7 : 22.

² Acts 2 : 22.

in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did";¹ and again when Lazarus had been raised from the dead, "Many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him."² But his following was not sufficiently large at the close of his ministry for the infant church to withstand the persecution inaugurated by its enemies. Therefore he promised that the "signs" should continue to "follow them that believe" as further evidence in confirmation of the truth of the gospel. The signs followed the disciples of Christ, until at least the close of the apostolic age, and the church was measurably established. Since that time, despite claims made here and there, miracles, we believe, have ceased.

Now, in summing up, we find that it took about eleven hundred years to establish the monotheistic doctrine in the Jewish nation; and about three hundred years to establish the doctrine of Christ in the Roman Empire. It was during those two periods only, of all the world's history, and among these two nations only, of all the nations of the earth, that we have any authentic account of miracles having been performed by human agency. These two periods put together make about fourteen hundred years, leaving about forty-five hundred years, or more than three-fourths of the entire history of the human race according to current chronology without miracles; and according to Mormon

¹ John 2 : 23.

² John 11 : 45.

doctrines, during all this stretch of time, in which there were no miracles, God had no people on the face of the earth.

The Mosaic economy was established by its own miracles, and so was the Christian dispensation; which miracles, as we have seen, were wrought before the eyes of the public, and published to the world; and now, if the Mormons had another dispensation of the word of God, as they claim, it would also be confirmed in like manner. They claim the power to do greater works even than Christ himself, but at the same time they confess that they cannot perform miracles in the presence of unbelievers; which confession is simply an acknowledgment that they cannot perform them at all. The presence of unbelievers did not baffle the power of our Saviour, nor weaken the faith of the apostles. Their miracles would have been of but little force as evidences in support of the divine origin of the gospel which they preached, had they not been wrought in the presence of unbelievers. If the Mormons had the power of miracles they could demonstrate it to the world, and if they could they certainly would, for such proof would far exceed all the argument that they can produce; and if they had performed miracles, as they claim to have done, the world would know it, for our newspapers, that so eagerly search for startling items, would herald it from one end of the land to the other. So the facts being against them, the testimonials to the miracles of Mormons are false, and their claim to supernatural power unfounded in truth.

During my stay of nearly three years among the Mormons, I saw nothing amid all their performances that resembled a miracle. In a number of instances I was present with the elders when they administered to the sick, and being an elder myself at the time, I was often called on to assist, but not even one patient did I see, or hear of, that recovered instantly. It is true, a large percentage of them recovered, and that too, without the aid of medicine, by due process of nature.

I would not detract anything from the importance of praying for the sick, for it is right and necessary to invoke God's blessing upon them and to attend to the means used for their recovery. But let it be borne in mind that God's miraculous power and his providential care, are two entirely separate and distinct things. His miraculous power, as we have seen, was employed for a purpose which has long since been accomplished; but his providential care over his people is the same in all ages, and is being exercised to-day as ever in the past. His power is just as great now as in ages gone by, and if, in his wisdom, he should deem it needful to perform miracles through human agency, he would find some one through whom to work them. But since he seems to withhold his power at the present time, not all the Mormons in Utah can succeed in calling it down, nor can they work a miracle that can be substantiated. In the face of this, let none trust Mormon pretensions, nor care at all for any threats they may make. When they invoke upon you or for you the influence of a miraculous power, they make claim to that which they do not possess.

CHAPTER VII

SALVATION FOR THE LOST DEAD

THE Mormons believe that all who die without having embraced the Mormon religion in this life, will have a chance to receive it in the world to come, and thus be saved. They teach that the spirits of deceased Mormon elders are now in the spirit world, preaching the gospel to the spirits in prison, and that all will accept it and be saved with some degree of salvation. All classes of sinners, even the vilest and most abominable, are included in this plan of redemption.¹

In a futile attempt to support this doctrine by the Bible, they refer to 1 Peter 3:18-20, which says: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing." Even admitting that Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison, it is nowhere intimated that others would have given to them the same ministry.

This scripture is generally conceded by theolo-

¹ "Doctrine and Covenants," p. 271.

gians as of doubtful interpretation, but the idea that it conveys to my own mind is this: at death Christ was "quickened by the Spirit"; that is, he became as he was before his incarnation, even as he was in "in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing," at which time he went and preached through Noah, unto the spirits of those wicked antediluvians who were in the prison of sin. All true preaching is done by the quickening Spirit of Christ, and as Noah was a preacher of righteousness, it was by that Spirit that Noah preached; or rather, it was Christ himself preaching through Noah to those wicked people whose spirits were in the prison of sin "when once the longsuffering of God waited" for their repentance. All sinners being alienated from God and subject to the powers of darkness, are "led captive by the devil at his will," and being captive, they are prisoners.

The whole tenor of Scripture teaches that as death leaves us, the judgment will find us: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment,"¹ and that passage in Eccl. 11 : 3, which says: "If the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be," is also suggestive of this fact.

Our Lord's parable of Lazarus and the rich man forever sets aside the doctrine of preaching the gospel to the lost in the spirit world. In this parable we read that Lazarus, "the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in

¹ Heb. 9 : 27.

hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.''¹

This parable has reference to the intermediate state between death and the resurrection, and not to the time after the resurrection, for we are told in ver. 27 that the rich man's five brethren were still living in the world. It was given to illustrate the real condition of all men, both of the righteous and the wicked, in the intermediate state. What is shown to be the condition of Lazarus, is that of all the righteous; and what is true of the rich man is also true of all the wicked. It is shown also that the two classes go to separate places, and that a great gulf is fixed between them, so that they cannot pass from one side to the other. As the rich man has passed beyond the bounds of grace, so is there no mercy for his companions of like character. Hence, we conclude that no Mormon elders are preaching on the other side the gospel of redemption.

¹ Luke 16 : 22-26.

We now come to notice the doctrine of baptizing for the dead, which is a doctrine akin to the preceding. As has been shown, Mormons teach that all who do not embrace the gospel in this present life will accept it in that which is to come. But as they hold to the doctrine that no sin can be forgiven without water baptism, therefore all who thus receive the gospel must also receive baptism or else they cannot be saved; and since the spirits cannot be baptized for themselves, they must receive it by proxy. They therefore baptize the living for the dead.

This is a temple ordinance, and its practice may be illustrated as follows: Mr. A and wife go to the temple to render service to the dead. They have many relatives and friends who died without being members of the Mormon Church. For these they are baptized. He is baptized for the male relatives and friends on both sides, while she performs the same service for the females.

There is one single passage of Scripture to which they refer in support of this practice. It is 1 Cor. 15: 29, where the apostle says, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" This Scripture does not convey the idea that it was a Christian practice, but rather to the contrary. Had the apostle included himself in its practice he would have used the personal pronoun "we," or had he included the Corinthian brethren he would have used the pronoun "you," but the pronoun used is "they," the third person, applying only to those spoken of.

Now, there is some doubt in regard to the parties concerning whom the apostle used these words. The only thing respecting which we are sure is that such a practice existed. Paul refers to it to strengthen his argument for the resurrection, since if there were no resurrection they would be inconsistent who practised this baptism for the dead. However unscriptural this practice might be, its existence proved a belief in the resurrection, and it was for this reason that the apostle made reference to it. It is needless to say that there is no Bible sanction for it.

But let us proceed a little further with the investigation of this doctrine and see to what absurd extremes the Mormons are led. As they believe that the whole world was without the gospel for more than a millennium and a half prior to Joseph Smith, it devolves upon them to be baptized for all the countless myriads of every nation under heaven that have passed from earth during that period, and also for all outside the Mormon Church down to the present day.

There is another very singular custom in connection with their baptism for the dead. The names of all those for whom they are performed must be recorded. Joseph Smith gave instructions concerning this in "Doctrine and Covenants," section 128. Their names are to be recorded in books prepared and kept for that purpose, and each baptism must be certified to by two eye-witnesses of the same, and "these records" Smith claimed, will be used in the general judgment. These records form the book referred to by John in Rev.

20:12. The absurdity of this lies upon its face. How they are to get the names of all those of all nations, both Christian and pagan, for more than seventeen hundred years past; and how those records are to withstand the destroying hand of time, and pass through the great conflagration foretold by Scripture, to come at the end of the world, by which all things corruptible are to be consumed, are questions that would puzzle the most astute Mormon elder to answer.

If preaching the gospel in the spirit world and baptizing for the dead involves the eternal destiny of such a vast majority of the human race, it does seem to the thoughtful mind that there would have been something specific said about it in the Bible. There is not; and as the Bible is given us to make us "wise unto salvation," the inference is a fair one that the doctrine is not a biblical one, but one invented by man.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BEING AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

THE Mormon doctrine concerning the being of God is very low and degrading. They teach that "God the Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's"; that "he has all the parts and passions of a man"; and in fact that he originated as a human being, having been born in the flesh; that he grew from childhood to manhood, was obedient to his parents, and diligent in study, and thereby advanced step by step in obtaining knowledge and power, until he finally reached the exalted position of a God, with sufficient wisdom and power to create, or rather, as they teach, to form worlds and people them. Furthermore, they teach that he is not yet an absolutely perfect being, but that he is still progressing, and may so continue to progress indefinitely. They also hold to polytheism, that is, that there are many gods. They teach that the father of our God was also a god, and that his grandfather was a god, and so on, thus forming a genealogy of gods extending back indefinitely. They teach that "what man is, God has been, and what God is, man may be," and now, coming squarely to the point, they teach that "Adam is our God, and the only God with whom we have to do."

In support of this gross idea of the person of God, they refer to Heb. 1 : 3, which mentions the similarity of the Son to the Father as being "the express image of his person." This they apply to the material body, and thus argue that as Christ ascended into heaven with a body, therefore the Father must also have a body of like substance.

But let us look into this idea just a little. In 1 Cor. 15 : 50, the apostle informs us that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Christ appeared to his disciples after his resurrection in a material body. He ate with his disciples, and they handled him and saw that he was truly the Christ. All this was needful to establish the fact of his resurrection. The final change had not yet come, for he was not yet glorified. It could not come before, for the glorified Christ could not have remained for even forty days in human conditions.

There is another scripture used by the Mormons in support of their position. It is the words of the angels concerning his ascension as given in Acts 1 : 11: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." They take this to apply to the body. But in Acts 1 : 9 we are told that "a cloud received him out of their sight," and again that at his second advent he will come in the clouds of heaven; hence we conclude that "in like manner" refers rather to the method of his coming than to him.

Now divine revelation plainly affirms the existence and unity of God, and also that his nature is spiritual; "God is a spirit." The teaching of the Scriptures in this respect cannot be mistaken; innumerable passages and allusions show that the terms spirit and body, or matter, are used in the popular sense; that the former only can perceive, think, reason, will, and act; and that the latter is imputed to him only in the popular sense. Terms implying matter are used because only by their use can he be described at all. But God, as revealed in holy writ, is spirit, not body; mind, not matter. He is pure spirit, unconnected even with bodily form or organs; the invisible God, whom no man hath seen, or can see, immaterial, incorruptible, impassible, an immense mind or intelligence, self-acting, self-moving, wholly above the perception of bodily sense; free from the imperfections of matter, and all the infirmities of corporeal beings.

More at large do we learn what God is from the following declarations of the inspired writing:

"As to *duration*: that 'from everlasting to everlasting he is God'; 'the king eternal, immortal, invisible.' That after all the manifestations he has made of himself he is, from the infinite perfection and glory of his nature, *incomprehensible*: 'so these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is known of him'; 'touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.' That he is *unchangeable*: 'The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning.' That 'he is the fountain of life,' and the only inde-

pendent being in the universe. 'Who only hath immortality.' That every other being, however exalted, has its existence from him: 'For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in the earth, visible and invisible.' That the existence of everything is upheld by him, no creature being for a moment independent of his support: 'By him all things consist'; 'Upholding all things by the word of his power.' That he is *omnipresent*: 'Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?' That he is *omniscient*: 'All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.' That he is the absolute *lord* and *owner* of all things: 'The heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God.' 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein, he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.' That his *providence* extends to the minutest objects: 'The hairs of your head are all numbered'; 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father.' "

Thus we might continue to notice the perfections of God, which are shown to be infinitely beyond the ideas entertained by the Mormons. Not only do they hold to the doctrine that God is an imperfect material being, but they teach that he is a polygamist; and that his numerous wives are the mothers of our spirits. They also teach that Jesus Christ was a polygamist, and that Mary and Martha and Mary Magdalene were his wives.

CHAPTER IX

THE MAN-GOD DOCTRINE

WE have seen that the Mormons teach that "Adam is our God, and the only God with whom we have to do," but by closer investigation we find that they have a God nearer than he, in the person of the president of the church. His power is outlined in one of Smith's "revelations" as follows: "I have conferred upon you [Joseph] the keys and power of the Priesthood, wherein I restore all things; . . . and verily, verily, I say unto you, that whatsoever you seal on earth, shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever you bind on earth, in my name, and by my word saith the Lord, it shall be eternally bound in the heavens; and whosoever sins you remit on earth, shall be remitted eternally in the heavens; and whosoever sins you retain on earth shall be retained in heaven. And again, verily I say unto you, whomsoever you bless, I will bless, and whomsoever you curse, I will curse, saith the Lord, for I am the Lord thy God."¹ Smith's successors to the presidency claimed equal powers with himself, therefore the man who now presides over their destinies claims to possess all the powers outlined in the above quotation.

¹"Doctrine and Covenants," p. 471.

So here is a finite being who is full of the weakness of human nature, and who knows no man's heart, and has not the power to even "make one hair white or black," but assuming a divine power claims to hold the destinies of his fellow-men in his hands, and attempts to forgive or retain a man's sins, claiming that his action is final, being sustained in all things by God himself; thus he assumes to open heaven, or to shut heaven, for or against a man according to his own will.

In this assumed power we find a literal fulfillment of the prophecy of the Apostle Paul in 2 Thess. 2 : 3, 4, which says: "Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come [that is, the second coming of Christ] except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." A fulfillment of this prophecy is plainly seen in the assumed power of the Mormon deity, who, by officiating in the temple, assumes to dictate to Almighty God, by "blessing" and "cursing" his fellow-man.

So complete is the control of this Mormon deity over his subjects, that it is always their supreme pleasure to obey his command. Believing, as they do, that all his words and actions are by divine inspiration, they yield themselves his willing subjects, and fear to deviate in the least from his counsel. Whenever he publishes a new revelation, though it may conflict with some previous revela-

tion of his or that of his predecessors, they always accept it at once and never question its consistency; and though his doctrine may be in direct opposition to the Bible, they never think it strange, but simply claim that the Scriptures so conflicting were incorrectly translated. Thus they try to hold up their prophet at the expense of the Bible, and attempt to make that false in order to establish the word of their pretended deity.

Whenever this monarch orders his subjects together, they promptly obey, and gather to the place pointed out by him, though it cost them all they have, and the sacrifice of all their former friends; or if he orders them to disperse, or to remain abroad, it is their pleasure to obey; and his elders, when called out, go promptly at his command, and willingly remain abroad until he sees proper to release them from the command; and even in all their temporal affairs they are subject to his council. Thus we see that all their interests, their lives and their fortunes, temporally and spiritually, both for time and eternity, they willingly submit to "that man of sin who exalteth himself above all that is called God." They give to him their homage. While it is true they worship "in the name of Christ," it is in name only, for there can be none of the spirit and power of Christ in any such religion; but believing, as they do, that their prophet holds such supreme power, it naturally follows that they would give to him their worship and adoration.

Never did the Pope of Rome exercise such absolute control over his subjects as is held by the

Mormon president. While his laws cannot now be fully enforced, as some of them are in opposition to the laws of our government, yet they still prophesy that the time will come when they shall have full control of the government of the United States, and then they hope to be able to fully enforce their laws and practise their religion to its full extent. To this end they are at work. Were it possible that they should ever obtain such power, then it would, in my opinion, be woe unto those who dared to oppose Mormonism.

There is no such thing as independent thought and free speech in the faithful Mormon circles. On matters pertaining to their religion, they are expressly forbidden to debate any question among themselves; but in case any doubts are entertained on any subject, the question is submitted to the prophet, whose ruling is accepted as the word of God, and therefore final. They have their Mutual Improvement Associations, in which they discuss subjects pertaining to their religion; but all engaged are required to take the same side of the question, and about the extent of their discussions is to produce argument in support of the doctrine under consideration and to bear their testimony that they know the doctrine to be true. There is nothing whatever in such discussions to elicit thought, or to bring forth and develop the latent power of reason, without the exercise of which there can be no freedom.

If a Mormon sees proper to differ with his superior officers on any point of doctrine, he is at once denounced as a heretic and on the way to

apostasy, and in case he maintains his position he soon finds himself "cut off" from the church, with the anathemas of the priesthood pronounced against him.

An incident connected with my experience with Mormonism, will illustrate how completely the faithful Mormon is subjugated to his prophet. While in Manassa, Col., I was connected with the Mutual Improvement Association, and on one occasion the subject under discussion was, "The Mission of John the Baptist." I knew that Joseph Smith had said in one of his "revelations" that Elijah and Elias were two different men, and as it came in line with the subject under consideration, I took the position that the two names apply to the one man; explaining, that Elijah was a Hebrew name, and Elias was the Greek for the same name, and that the reason the name Elijah appears in the Old Testament and Elias in the New Testament was that the original writing of the former was in Hebrew, while that of the latter was Greek; but the president of the association took issue with me at once. He said that my position appeared reasonable, but as the prophet Joseph had spoken differently, I was therefore in error, and must yield my opinion to his word of inspiration.

As to the "power to bind or to loose on earth and it will be ratified in heaven," this they argue is supported by the Scriptures. They refer to the following words spoken by our Lord to Peter: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou

shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven'';¹ and in Matt. 18 : 18, this power was also conferred upon all the apostles. Now the power conferred upon the apostle, as I look at it, as to the keys of the kingdom of heaven, was simply to open the gospel dispensation to the whole world; first to the Jews, which he did on the day of Pentecost, and then to the Gentiles, which he did in the house of Cornelius; and this was the extent of Peter's power with those keys.

We have no instance of the apostles forgiving the sins of any individual. They merely proclaimed the terms of pardon; and neither did they forgive the sins of any one, except as they first declared them condemned by the nature of the gospel, of which they were preachers. They authoritatively explained in their writings the terms of forgiveness; they stated as to duty what is obligatory and what is not obligatory upon Christians. They pronounced impenitent and unbelieving sinners to be under God's wrath; and thus they bound or remitted sins according as those who heard believed or disbelieved. The meaning of this passage is in this manner explained by the practice of the apostles themselves; but to forgive and to retain sins in the Mormon sense, is to exercise a power that God has never delegated to man. We are commanded and empowered, however, to forgive each other our trespasses, but for sins committed against God, he, and he alone, has the power to forgive. This

¹ Matt. 16 : 19.

Mormon doctrine is very unreasonable, as well as unscriptural, and is detrimental to the best interests of all who hold it, as it attributes to finite being a supreme power—an impossibility—and gives rise to man-worship.

It is taught in one of Smith's revelations that those who receive the temple work will be Gods in eternity. His language is as follows: "Then shall they be Gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be Gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them."¹

They believe that they will have power and knowledge sufficient to enable them to create worlds, and to people and govern them. Such presumptuous folly is too repellent to merit an investigation by intelligent people.

¹ "Doctrine and Covenants," p. 467.

CHAPTER X

POLYGAMY

THE practice of polygamy is evidently to the Mormon the most sacred part of his religion, as it is made the basis for the Mormon covenant. On page 463 of "Doctrine and Covenants," Smith begins his revelations concerning polygamy, by saying: "Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you, my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I, the Lord, justified my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; as also Moses, David, and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines. Behold! and lo, I am the Lord thy God, and will answer thee as touching this matter: therefore prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same"; and he then proceeds to lay it down as a fundamental principle of the Mormon faith, and enforced by very stringent laws as follows: "For behold! I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant, and be permitted to enter into my glory." And farther on in this "revela-

tion" he says that the terms of this "covenant" is the practice of polygamy as did David and Solomon.

By the above, it is seen that the Mormons cannot consistently abandon the practice of polygamy without denouncing Joseph Smith as an impostor. They have been forced by the government of the United States to give up its public practice; but they still hold to the doctrine, and engage in its practice secretly, and hope for the time to come when they may again enter into its practice openly and above board.

They undertake to defend the practice of polygamy by the Scriptures, claiming that as it was practised by some of the patriarchs and prophets, it is therefore right. Now that the practice is condemned by the Scriptures may be very easily shown. While it was allowed among the Jews, it was not commanded of God. Sarah told Abraham to take Hagar to wife, but God did not command it. Like the divorce, and some other measures of the law of Moses, which were allowed on account of the hardness of their hearts, polygamy was also allowed under the old dispensation, but was condemned by Christ. He says concerning the marriage covenant that "he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife [not wives], and they twain [not three or more] shall be one flesh."¹

In this scripture our Saviour refers to the mar-

¹ Matt. 19 : 4, 6.

riage law of God established in the creation of man, which has precedence over all other laws and customs of men. In the creation God made but one woman for the man, and Christ in referring to this fact forever seals the doom of polygamy. The marriage covenant, entered into and solemnized by the proper authority, is simply an acknowledgment of this law established in the beginning, and by this law a man cannot be married to more than one woman at a time. Though they be united in polygamy by a hundred Mormon ceremonies, it cannot be recognized in the sight of God as legal marriage, but is adultery. Whenever a man takes another woman to wife while living with his first wife, he is as guilty of adultery as though he had put his first away without a cause; and as Christ condemns adultery, he also condemns polygamy. He does not call it polygamy, but by its right name—adultery, for adultery is what it is.

“Nature itself comes in also as a confirmation of this original law. In births there is a small surplusage of males over females, which being reduced by the more precarious life of males, and by the accidents to which, more than females, they are exposed from wars and dangerous employments, brings the number of males and females to a par, and shows that in the order of Providence, a man ought to have but one wife, and that where polygamy is not allowed, every woman may have a husband. This equality too is found in all countries, although some licentious writers have attempted to deny it upon unsound evidence.”

When, in 1843, Joseph Smith introduced polyg-

amy, he informed his wife, Emma, of his intention to take another wife, but, like a true woman, she resented the base insult, and refused to submit. He then undertook to force her to agree to his adulterous union with another by threats of her destruction, as the following extract from his revelation on polygamy will show: "I command my handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant, Joseph, and to none else. But if she will not abide this commandment, she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord; for I am the Lord thy God, and will destroy her, if she abide not in my law."¹ And again on pp. 473, 474, he lays down a law of like nature that is of general application to his church, which is as follows: "If any man have a wife, who holds the keys of this power, and he teaches unto her the law of my Priesthood, as pertaining to these things [that is, that he should take another wife], then shall she believe, and administer unto him, or she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord your God, for I will destroy her."

It was in 1862 that Congress passed the first anti-polygamy law aimed at the suppression of the practice among the Mormons; but by means of their secret combinations they were enabled to prevent its enforcement to any great extent. During a period of twenty years the government sought to effectually enforce the law, while the Mormons, on the other hand, defied the government to persist in its course. They claimed that polygamy was a divine institution, and that God had placed

¹ "Doctrine and Covenants," p. 472.

it in the church to remain forever, and that therefore neither the United States, nor the whole world combined, could put it down; and they even went so far as to prophesy in the name of the Lord that if the government much longer persisted in its efforts to suppress polygamy, God would "come forth from his hiding-place, and make bare his mighty arm in the defense of his saints, and destroy the nation from the face of the earth."

But, in 1882 Congress passed the Edmunds anti-polygamy bill, which proved effectual. This bill was so framed as to take advantage of their secret combinations, and during a period of about four years from its passage, there were about one thousand convictions made by the Federal courts in Utah, and about eighty thousand dollars in fines collected and paid into the government treasury. But during these four years of wholesale conviction, fining, and imprisoning of the Mormons, they stoutly refused to become loyal to the government. They waited, but in vain, for their god to come to their rescue; and finally, their prophet, tired of waiting and suffering, and seeing that there was a greater power vested in the government of the United States than in the Mormon god, set himself to work and secured a new revelation, countermanding the prescriptions of the old as to this matter, and instructing his subjects to submit to the demand of the law.

CHAPTER XI

MISCELLANEOUS DOCTRINE AND PRACTICES

THE Mormons baptize by immersion, and they rebaptize occasionally for the remission of sins committed after the first baptism has been received. This applies only to those who have not received the temple work.

They have a tithing law, requiring the tenth of everything produced, even to garden vegetables, to be paid into a common church fund, which goes to support the officers of the church, and maintain church institutions. In addition to this is required a tenth of their time in labor on some church enterprise.

They are great lovers of worldly amusements, as is shown by their frequent engagement in the dance. They set apart Friday night of every week, in each settlement, as a time to come together for that purpose, and their dances are well patronized. They occasionally give a dance for the old folks, where the gray-headed fathers and mothers may be seen "tripping the light fantastic toe." That they engage so intensively in this practice is not at all surprising, as polygamy and the modern dance go together not inappropriately. They open and close the dance with prayer, which to a thoughtful observer, seems like a mockery before God.

The temple work is the great thing in Mormonism. It was not my misfortune to get this far into it. As to the temple secrets I know nothing, but have been informed by men who have been through the temple, that its work was a profound secret, and that they had taken a most solemn obligation never to reveal them. Before a Mormon can enter the temple he must be a member of the church for at least two years, and must have a recommendation from his bishop stating that he has paid his tithing promptly, and has obeyed the council of priesthood, and has in every way proven himself a faithful saint. It is in the temple that they marry for eternity, and marry the dead to the living for eternity, and baptize for the dead.

As has been intimated in another chapter, the Mormons hold to the old theory of *the eternity of matter*; and that all substance is matter, even that of spirit itself. The following is the way Smith gave it in "Doctrine and Covenants," p. 463: "There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes."

Of course there is no such thing as "immaterial matter," and no man of ordinary intelligence would make such a silly assertion; but there is such a thing as immaterial substance. There is a material substance; and there is an immaterial, or spiritual substance. The material is corruptible, and subject to decay, or to be acted upon by the forces of nature, and is therefore not eternal, but will pass away; while all spiritual substance is incorruptible, and therefore eternal. The apostle makes this very

plain in 1 Cor. 15, and especially at the forty-fourth verse, where, speaking of the manner of the resurrection body, he says: "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body"; as much as to say, There is a substance that is material, and there is also a substance that is immaterial. The human body is material substance in this life, but it must of necessity be changed to a spiritual body in the resurrection, because "Flesh and blood," or material substance, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

As to angels, and all glorified beings in heaven, the Mormons teach that they all have material bodies; and that it is a very common thing for angels to come down from heaven, and travel about through the country, as men, dressed in citizen's clothes, but that the common run of folks who see them never take them to be angels.

In order to show how extremely credulous the Mormons are along this line, an incident may be given as related by a traveling elder. The substance of this is as follows: A few years ago a certain stranger in traveling through a certain settlement in the State of Missouri, called and spent the night with a certain family. While there, the stranger taught a certain doctrine, in which the family was induced to believe, and they demanded baptism at his hands; but he told them that to baptize was not his mission, but that two men would soon come that way, preaching the same doctrine that he had taught them, who would be empowered to baptize, and then they could receive baptism of them.

With this the stranger went away, leaving the family in ignorance as to who he was. Shortly after, two Mormon elders came to the same house, and were taken in; and on making known their mission, they were informed of the stranger and what he had said to them; whereupon the elders told them that he was an angel of the Lord, sent down from heaven to prepare the way before them. This "angel" wore a Prince Albert coat and a Derby hat, and the Mormon Church thought it meet to do him honor by adopting his style of dress for the traveling elders. So this is the reason why all Mormon elders dress as they do.

There is a little band of Mormons in Central Mississippi, now in the midst of a most disgraceful scandal, which originated solely among themselves, and in which several of the traveling elders are involved. Notwithstanding the prompt and strenuous efforts of the priesthood to cover it up and keep it from the public, it has come to light. Their licentious practices in this scandalous affair, which are too obscene to be here described, are in keeping with doctrines that the elders have been preaching recently in secret meetings.

How shall we rid the country of the Mormon elders? is a question that is agitating the minds of a great many people at the present time. The laws of the land guarantee to them the right to preach and to practise their religion—polygamy excepted—anywhere in the United States; but, while this is true, there is no law to compel any

man to receive them into his house, nor to assist them in any way in their pernicious work. When they call at our gates it would be well for us to apply the injunction of the Apostle John, who says: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine," the doctrine of Christ, "receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."¹ But as an offset to this scripture, the Mormons are always ready to use that passage in Heb. 13 : 2, which says: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." And this they misquote by saying, "You may entertain angels," instead of "some have entertained angels." When it is made known who the elders are, which they generally do on calling at the gate, or door, then in a sense they are no longer strangers to those who know anything of Mormonism; and in turning them away, you may be quite sure that you are not refusing to entertain angels.

For humanity's sake, they may be taken in and cared for when in actual need of charitable assistance, but in no case should they be received in the name of a disciple of Christ, nor be encouraged in the propagation of their religion. But care should be taken not to do them violence, for the following reasons: In the first place it is wrong, for the word says, "Do violence to no man"; and in the next place, such treatment always tends to make converts to Mormonism, instead of driving

¹ 2 John 10.

men from it. They receive all rough treatment as persecution for a righteous cause, and referring to certain passages of Scripture which say that the disciples of Christ shall suffer persecutions, they apply it to themselves; and their sympathizers take it as an evidence that Mormonism is the true religion. But by reference to Matt. 5 : 10, 11, it will be seen that the blessings of Christ are to those only who are persecuted for his sake and for righteousness' sake. He says: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." Now I suppose no one has ever persecuted the Mormons for believing in Christ, nor for preaching Christ; neither have they at any time been persecuted for doing right, nor for preaching righteousness; but the people are provoked to treat them roughly by their licentiousness, and other evils, which they introduce as religious rites.

The persecutions that the Mormons have received have done more to proselyte to the Mormon faith than any other agency. Persecute the adherents of any religion, whether true or false, and you always build it up. Such is human nature. Therefore, to rid the country of Mormonism, do not use the shot gun and tar and feathers, but fight it with "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," and in course of time it will come to naught.

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